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ABSTRACT

This report examines the length of time it takes Maryland students to earn a baccalaureate at a public college in the state, the factors that might delay degree progress, and alternative strategies for reducing time-to-degree. Among new full-time freshmen at Maryland's public four-year campuses since 1980, most took longer than 4 years to earn a bachelor's degree. One-fourth of the freshmen who entered a four-year campus in 1989 had achieved a baccalaureate 4 years later, half had bachelor's degrees after 5 years and 58 percent after 6 years. The average number of credits taken by full-time Maryland students is 14, a rate that will not result in degree attainment in 4 years. Transfer students from community colleges also take longer than the traditional time to earn a bachelor's degree. Of transfers from community colleges during the 1990-91 academic year, only 10 percent had completed degrees 2 years later. The types of factors responsible for longer time-to-degree include external (finances), individual (student's abilities), and institutional (policies). Institutional or state-imposed limits, modified academic policies, and incentives have been suggested as means to reduce time-to-degree. Data tables on trends in graduation rates by campus for Maryland public four-year campuses, summary of focus group interviews, and summary of state actions to reduce time-to-degree are appended. (JLS)

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MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

ED 404 977

STUDY OF TIME-TO-DEGREE IN MARYLAND

DECEMBER 1996

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The General Assembly passed a resolution (S.J. 6) during its 1996 session asking the Maryland Higher Education Commission to undertake a study of the issues associated with the amount of time it takes to earn a degree at Maryland colleges and universities, including a review of all viable incentives and strategies.

This report contains the findings of this study. It examines the length of time it takes Maryland students to earn a baccalaureate at a public campus in the state, the factors that might delay a student's degree progress, alternatives strategies for reducing time-to-degree, and recommendations of the Commission.

Length of Time to Earn a Bachelor's Degree

Among new full-time freshmen at Maryland's public four-year campuses since 1980, most of those who eventually earned a bachelor's degree took longer than four years to do it. Just one-fourth of the full-time freshmen who entered a public four-year campus in 1989 had achieved a baccalaureate four years later. However, half had received a bachelor's degree after five years and 58 percent after six years. These figures are consistent with the number of credit hours students take. According to a study by the University of Maryland System, the average full-time, degree seeking undergraduate at its campuses takes about 14 credits each semester. This pattern of course-taking will not result in degree attainment in four years.

Two Maryland campuses, St. Mary's College and Salisbury State University, had notably above average four-year graduation rates--a reflection of the selectivity of the admissions process at these institutions.

Community college transfer students, who enter a four-year institution with a certain number of credits, also take longer than the traditional time frame to earn a bachelor's degree. Of the students who transferred to a Maryland public four-year institution during the 1990-1991 academic year, only 10 percent had earned a baccalaureate two years later. However, the graduation rate rose to 35 percent after three years and 55 percent after five. University of Maryland at Baltimore, which offers at the undergraduate level only upper division programs in health fields. had a substantially higher graduation rate for community college transfer students.

Factors Associated With Time-to-Degree

Three types of factors have been identified as being responsible for slowing a student's degree progress: environmental (those arising from external circumstances, such as financial circumstances), individual (those due to a student's personal abilities, attributes and plans), and institutional (those caused by the policies and practices of the college or university).

To determine whether these factors played a role in time-to-degree in Maryland, a series of focus group interviews were conducted with undergraduate students at six public four-year institutions who are taking longer than four years to earn a baccalaureate. Environmental barriers included family responsibilities, the need to work, grade point average competition with other students, cooperative education or field work, and outside distractions like extracurricular activities. The most frequently expressed individual factor involved lack of maturity when starting college. The most frequently mentioned institutional factors were related to the quality of advising, the lack of availability of courses, and transfer policies (notably for out- of state students).

Strategies for Shortening Time-to-Degree

There are three broad types of approaches that have been discussed and/or implemented for shortening the time it takes to attain a bachelor's degree: institutional or state imposed limits (mandated actions imposed on colleges and universities by their governing board or by the legislature), academic policies (efforts to tailor the academic procedures, programs and structures of an institution to speed a student's degree progress), and incentives (enticements to students or institutions).

Institutional or state-imposed limits include restrictions on the number of credits required for a degree and on state-subsidized education. Among the academic policies are agreements with high schools to encourage acceleration techniques such as advanced placement, increased emphasis on academic advising, increased course availability, articulation agreements with community colleges on transfer of credit, better preparation of students in high school, four-year graduation guarantees, and mechanisms that allow students to complete a baccalaureate within three years. Financial rewards to students or institutions and credit for service learning are examples of incentives.

States have varied in their response to this issue. A cataloguing of time-to-degree strategies employed across the country found that the most frequently used approaches have been limiting credits required for the baccalaureate, increasing the availability of required courses, improving academic counseling, facilitating transfer of credit, enabling high school students to earn college credit through acceleration mechanisms, and working with high schools to prepare students better.

Maryland, which is now beginning to examine this issue, has emphasized academic-related solutions. Maryland:

- is a national leader in the use of advanced placement.
- piloted a National Early Intervention Scholarship and Partnership Program to inform high school students about the courses they need to achieve success in college.

- has expanded the use of distance learning and other educational technologies to make courses more available to students.
- has adopted statewide Student Transfer Policies designed to solve most of the problems surrounding transferability of credit
- is studying ways to reduce the number of college students who require remedial assistance

INTRODUCTION

The General Assembly passed a resolution (S.J. 6) during its 1996 session requesting the Maryland Higher Education Commission to undertake a study of the issues associated with the amount of time it takes to earn a degree at Maryland colleges and universities, including a review of all viable incentives and strategies. The Commission was asked to report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor by December 31, 1996.

This report contains the results of this study. It examines the length of time it takes Maryland students to earn a baccalaureate at a public institution in the state, the factors that might impede a student's progress toward a degree, alternative strategies for reducing time-to-degree, and recommendations of the Commission.

Background

A growing number of college students are taking longer than four years to complete a baccalaureate, which is generating interest in shortening the time it takes to earn a degree. The passage of S.J. 6 in Maryland is indicative of actions in other states, where parents, educators and lawmakers alike are expressing concern about the number of students who are unable to finish a bachelor's degree within the traditional time period. This issue has relevance in Maryland, where just 24 percent of the freshmen who enter a public four-year college or university graduate within four years. Comparable statistics in other states show four-year graduation rates of between 15 and 33 percent. Because so many students who enter college as full-time freshmen now take five years or longer to earn their degree, most college guidebooks no longer use four-year graduation figures. The Federal Student Right To Know legislation, which requires institutions to report graduation rate statistics on demand, adopted a standard of six years for four-year institutions.

Reducing time-to-degree offers benefits to all participants in higher education and to the taxpayer. For students, it represents a way to cut tuition costs and to gain faster entry to the job market or graduate or professional school. For colleges and universities, it offers an opportunity to cope with fiscal constraints brought on by state budget pressures, to provide access to higher education for additional students for whom there otherwise might not be space, to make more institutional financial aid available for new students, to make campus enrollment management less complicated, to make more efficient use of campus staff and facilities, and to produce more graduates in less time. For the taxpayer, it economizes on the amount spent subsidizing the education of students. Reducing time-to-degree addresses the issues of cost and productivity in higher education, both of which are central to the demonstration of accountability.

LENGTH OF TIME TO EARN A BACHELOR'S DEGREE

This section will examine how many years it takes native four-year students and community college transfer students to earn a bachelor's degree at a Maryland public college or university. Specifically, it will look at the percentage of new full-time freshmen at Maryland public campuses who earn a baccalaureate in four, five, or six years after matriculation from any public institution in the state, and the proportion of community college transfer students who receive a bachelor's degree two, three, four or five years later from the institution to which they transferred. The tables in Appendix A show the time-to-degree patterns of native students for the entering classes between 1980 and 1991; community college transfers, between 1987 and 1993. In addition to a statewide summary, there are tables for each public four-year institution. Figures are presented for both all students and African-Americans separately.

These statistics show, of those new full-time freshmen or community college transfers who start together, how many finish their degrees within a certain time period. This "cohort survival method", which is implemented by matching the social security numbers of students on the Commission's enrollment and degree data bases, is more rigorous but produces generally lower rates than other techniques. A limitation of this methodology is that the Commission is unable to track students who leave a Maryland public campus and subsequently graduate from an independent institution in the state or from any college or university outside the state.

For each of the entering freshmen classes since 1980, most of the students who earned a bachelor's degree took longer than four years to do it. Of the new full-time freshmen who matriculated at a public four-year campus in 1989, for example, just 24.5 percent had attained a baccalaureate four years later. However, the percentage of graduates more than doubled to 50.4 percent after five years and increased to 58.2 percent after six years. A similar pattern is seen among African-Americans. Of those in the entering class of 1989, only 12 percent had earned a bachelor's degree after four years. After five years, however, the graduation rate of African-Americans jumped to almost 32 percent, and it rose to 39.1 percent after six years.

These statistics are partly explained by the results of a study by the University of Maryland System, which showed that the average full-time, degree seeking undergraduate from its campuses takes 14.24 credit hours each semester. In fall 1995, there were only two UMS institutions (University of Maryland at Baltimore and University of Maryland Eastern Shore) at which the average full-time undergraduate took at least 15 hours. Students following this pattern of course-taking will not earn a degree in four years.

Undergraduates at two Maryland public four-year institutions have experienced much higher than average four-year graduation rates. Nearly two-thirds of the entering

freshmen at St. Mary's College in 1991 had received a baccalaureate within four years, as did 42.7 percent of those at Salisbury State University. These figures tend to reflect the selectivity of the admissions process at these institutions.

Since students transfer from a community college to a four-year institution in Maryland with different numbers of credits, it is tricky to pinpoint a figure that is equivalent to a four-year graduation rate for a native student. Nonetheless, the figures suggest that community college transfer students also take longer than a traditional time frame to earn a bachelor's degree. For example, of the students who transferred during the 1990-1991 academic year, just 10.2 percent had earned a bachelor's degree two years after transferring. However, the graduation rate more than tripled to 35.1 percent after three years and rose to 54.8 percent after five years. A similar pattern emerged among African-American transfer students. For those who transferred in the 1990-1991 academic year, less than 5 percent had earned a baccalaureate after four years. Three years after transferring, this figure increased sharply to 18 percent, and it climbed to 38.3 percent after five years.

University of Maryland at Baltimore, which offers at the undergraduate level only upper-division programs in health fields, had substantially higher graduation rates for community college transfer students. Of the community college students who transferred during the 1993-1994 academic year, 71.6 percent had earned a bachelor's degree two years after transferring. More than 90 percent of UMAB's community college transfer students have typically graduated within four years of transferring.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH TIME-TO-DEGREE

Numerous factors that might impede a student's degree progress have been identified. a small amount based on research and the others anecdotal. These factors can be organized in three categories:

Environmental - those arising from external circumstances

- Poor job market for graduates
- Need to work full- or part-time while in college
- Family or other personal concerns
- Financial status of family

Individual - those due to a student's personal abilities, attributes and plans

- Social involvement in nonacademic or extracurricular activities
- Changes in major or double major
- Transferring among institutions

- Readiness for college or need for remediation
- Poor performance in classes
- Desire to protect a high grade point average by taking fewer courses

Institutional - those caused by the policies and practices of the college or university

- Inability to register for needed courses
- Limited access to upper division courses
- Full-time tuition policy based on 12 credits
- Number of credits required for graduation
- Course drop/add policies
- Problems in switching majors
- Quality of academic advising
- Availability of financial assistance
- Loss of credits in transferring

Method

Obtaining the prospective of students on the relevance of these factors in delaying their degree progress was considered integral to the study. Therefore, the Schaefer Center for Public Policy at the University of Baltimore was contracted to conduct a series of focus group interviews with undergraduate students at six Maryland public four-year institutions who are taking longer than four years to earn a bachelor's degree. Focus groups represent a technique for collecting qualitative data about a topic through guided discussion with a small group of people.

Separate focus group interviews were conducted at the following institutions: Bowie State University, Frostburg State University, Towson State University, University of Maryland Baltimore County, University of Maryland at College Park, and Morgan State University. The five campuses in the University of Maryland System were chosen with the advice of staff of the System Administration. Each campus supplied the Commission with the names and telephone numbers of prospective students for the focus groups. These students were to be reflective of their institutions in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, program, age and native/transfer status. The focus group interviews were held between October 15 and October 21.

Focus group interviews were used rather than a survey for several reasons. First, focus groups were seen as providing more detailed, qualitative information and personal accounts than was likely to be collected on a written questionnaire. Second, it was believed that focus groups would better tap the interaction among factors that might be responsible for affecting degree attainment. Third, focus groups are good devices for uncovering "hot button" and possibly sensitive concerns and allowing for follow-up questioning and probing about them. Fourth, time was of essence; it would have been extremely difficult to complete a survey adequately and still meet the

deadline established by the General Assembly. However, it must be acknowledged that participants in a focus group do not constitute a scientifically-drawn sample, and their comments cannot be generalized to a larger population. At best, they are equivalent to a "convenience sample" sometimes used in survey research. Hence, the observations made by the participants in this study cannot be considered necessarily representative of other students who are taking longer than four years to earn a baccalaureate.

Major Findings of the Focus Group Interviews

This is a summary of the major findings of the focus group interviews. Appendix B contains summary tables from the report prepared by the Schaefer Center for Public Policy. A copy of the complete report is available on request from the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

The general consensus among participants in the focus groups was that a student could obtain a degree in four years only under a limited set of circumstances. He or she would have to:

- have a clear idea of their major when entering college and not change it.
- be able to take a minimum of 15 hours for eight semesters.
- avoid any major that required more than 120 hours.
- avoid any major that required extensive field experience, internships or cooperative education.
- not loose any credits because of transfer or poor advising.
- not be closed out of or have to wait for upper division courses.
- avoid electives not required for general education or the major.
- maintain passing grades in all classes attempted.
- not engage in extracurricular activities such as sports that limit course loads.
- avoid working.
- avoid family or parental responsibilities.

The students also stated that faculty and administrators at their campus counseled that completing a baccalaureate in four years was unrealistic, despite pronouncements in college catalogues and official planning documents. Students said they were advised to plan on five years, especially if they were in the sciences or engineering. This stemmed from the increasing number of credit hours needed for some majors, the difficulty of some advanced courses, and the desire to maintain acceptable grade point averages.

Institutional Barriers

By far, the most frequently mentioned institutional factors related to the quality of advising, the availability of courses, and transfer policies.

Quality of Advising

Students felt that they had little help in sorting out the most appropriate or desirable majors for themselves when they entered college. Some students reported switching majors several times until the right fit could be made. Others reported changing majors after becoming more familiar with the nature of the career for which they were preparing. Several reported being in majors with which they were unhappy or which did not prepare them for the kinds of jobs they wanted. The result was wasted time and credits.

Many students also reported being overwhelmed by the initial academic advising they received in college, most of it given by administrators. Students said that they were provided only cursory advising, often by persons who did not know the appropriate requirements for different majors. The outcome: classes that were inappropriate or that did not fit the major. In other cases, students were advised as freshmen to take classes that were too advanced for them. They ended up in dropping the class and taking a light credit load during their first semester. This, they believed, put them behind from the beginning.

A number of problems associated with advising by faculty members was raised. These included: unavailability of faculty, lack of enthusiasm for advising, and unfamiliarity with degree or professional requirements. The outcome was inappropriate classes, classes that did not count toward the degree, or the selection of courses based on poor academic advice.

Course Availability

Complaints fell into three categories: not enough space for student demand, upper division courses offered infrequently, and class scheduling.

Students reported being closed out of upper division courses. There were insufficient seats for the number of students competing for space; as a result, students were told they had to wait another cycle to get into the class. Students reported that departments were unwilling to offer extra sections of classes to meet student demand, particularly when the course was the specialty of one or a few professors. This was most often cited in the sciences, engineering and computer science.

Students also reported that required upper division classes were available too infrequently. In some cases, required classes were offered only every fourth semester. Students who were either closed out of the class or unable to take it when offered had to wait several semesters. If they were close to graduation, students might take extra courses to maintain their full-time status until the required course was available again. The result: longer time in school and "unnecessary" accumulation of credits.

Class scheduling barriers cited by students included both the sequencing of courses and the time courses were offered. Sequencing problems--two semester courses that begin only in the fall or courses that require extensive prerequisites--made it more difficult for students to get the courses they needed. Time of day scheduling penalizes some students who have other commitments. Evening students, who reported that they face more limited offerings in general, found it difficult to take required courses early in the day. The same was true for day students who must work; courses offered in the evening were automatically unavailable to them. This was a particular problem for upper-division, required courses for which there was only one section. In addition, summer sessions typically contained a much narrower range of courses.

Academic policies only compounded these problems. For example, students at several schools reported that their institution requires the last 20 or 30 credits to be taken at that campus. This negates student access to the same or another acceptable course at another institution.

Transfer Problems

While not all transfer student had problems moving credits from one school to another, many reported losing credits in the process and being forced to repeat courses taken elsewhere. By far, those transferring to Maryland institutions from out of state experienced the most problems.

Students reported two distinct issues with transfer credit. First, very similar courses were classified at different levels across institutions. For example, an advanced biology course with the same content might be a 300-level course at one institution but a 400-level course at another. The 300-level course will not be accepted if the Maryland institution classifies it at the 400-level. Second, campuses organize course content differently. The result is that courses whose content varies from those of the institution to which the student is transferring often have to be repeated.

Other Institutional Barriers

These included remediation and tutoring, "credit creep", institutional communication, and access to support services.

The need for remediation in math or English posed barriers for some students. Remedial classes are considered prerequisites for entry-level math or English for students who do poorly. In some cases, the need for remediation was not diagnosed until students lost credits. In any case, remedial classes carry no credit toward graduation but still serve to put the student "off track."

Many expressed dissatisfaction with tutoring, saying that it was difficult to obtain timely help for classes in which they were struggling. Students said that tutoring was

either of poor quality or was not available when needed. Evening students reported having no access to tutors. Some students complained about the tutor's poor command of English.

Students in a variety of disciplines reported "credit creep"--when departments or majors require more than 120 credit hours to graduate and when required classes are added to the curriculum.

At some institutions, students reported that they were not informed of changes in majors or degree requirements, of changes in catalog information, and of deficiencies in required classes.

Students reported lacking access to or facing great competition for computer labs. Evening students were particularly critical about lack of access to administrators, advisors and necessary support services.

Environmental Barriers

Family responsibilities. The dominant themes in discussions of environmental factors included family pressures and responsibilities, particularly by non-traditional or returning students who are often parents themselves. The lack of day-care options and parenting duties reduced the time available for classes and posed scheduling problems.

Need to work. Many students take lower than average course loads because they work to support themselves and because of a lack of financial resources.

Grade point average competition. Students, particularly those in engineering, sciences and professional tracks, feel that the quality of their final GPA is important to securing a good job or getting into graduate programs. While they report it would be possible to carry higher course loads during the year, they could do so only at the expense of their GPA. They also sense that they would be at a competitive disadvantage to those taking fewer courses.

Cooperative education. For engineering students, taking cooperative education is a desirable job strategy. But those who pursue it either cannot take classes or must enroll for a reduced class load. Similar problems were encountered for programs that require extensive field work. Field work carries fewer credits than regular classes but consumes a large amount of time.

Distractions. Living in dormitories, the attractions of college towns or new environments, and extracurricular activities or college sports all served to cut away at the time available for classes or to contribute to poor performance in some classes. The result: fewer classes were attempted or some had to be repeated.

Location. In at least one instance, the location of the campus represented a serious barrier to students who lived off campus and relied on public transportation.

Individual Barriers

The most often voiced individual factor involved lack of maturity when starting college. While students were often well-prepared academically, they often saw themselves as poorly prepared emotionally to deal with the transition from a relatively sheltered life at home and high school to a more open life in college. Students reported experiencing a "burst of freedom." The result was often poor performance in one's early academic career, necessitating having to repeat classes or, in one case, to leave school altogether. Students reported that, at 18 years of age, they were not well equipped to appreciate the consequences of their decisions and often made poor choices that had serious repercussions.

A few students also reported extending their college years because it was a "comfort zone." College, to them, was a relatively comfortable place. Faced with the anxieties associated with the transition to working life, economic uncertainly, and loan repayment, it was preferable to stay in college a little longer.

STRATEGIES FOR SHORTENING TIME-TO-DEGREE

Several strategies have been discussed or implemented in other states to shorten the time it takes to earn a bachelor's degree. Despite the many options that exist, some of which are easy to implement, states have varied in their response to this issue. While some, like Maryland, are only beginning to examine the alternatives, others have gone as far as to legislate remedies.

This section contains a description of the leading alternatives, and the extent to which each has been tried in Maryland. These strategies fall into three categories:

Institutional or State-Imposed Limits

- Limits on the number of credits required for a degree
- Limits on state-subsidized education

Academic Policies

- Articulation agreements with high schools
- Increased emphasis on academic advising
- Increased course availability

- Articulation agreements with community colleges on transfer of credit
- Better preparation of students in high school
- Four year graduation guarantees
- Mechanisms that allow students to complete a baccalaureate within three years

Incentives

- Financial rewards to students or institutions
- Credit for service learning

A categorization of the time-to-degree strategies pursued by Maryland and 26 other states that responded to e-mail inquiries from the State Higher Education Executive Officers about this subject is in Appendix C.

Institutional or State-Imposed Limits

These are mandated actions imposed on colleges and universities by their governing board or by the legislature of their state.

Limit the number of credits required for a degree

Institutions and system boards can monitor the length of programs and limit baccalaureate requirements to the normally recognized convention of 120-130 semester credit hours. The survey of states found that nearly half (13 of 27) have begun to regulate the number of credits an institution can require for a degree or are considering variations of this approach. Among these is Virginia, which mandated that all schools should reduce credit hours. Within a year of this action, 80 percent of all programs required between 120 and 124 credits for completion of a bachelor's degree--down from an average of 130. In North Carolina, undergraduate degree programs are limited to 128 semester hours, although a small number of exceptions have been made (generally in health sciences and other professional fields). A study in North Carolina found that only 16 postsecondary education programs could justify requiring more than 128 hours to complete. **This approach has not been tried in Maryland.**

Limit state-subsidized education

Students can be charged additional fees if they take excessive numbers of credits. Few states have adopted this course of action, but it has received a great deal of attention. Beginning in 1994, North Carolina undergraduates have been assessed a 25 percent surcharge if they took more than 110 percent of the credits needed to complete a baccalaureate. The Florida legislature imposed a similar surcharge in May. However, according to representatives at the University of North Carolina System, the new policy has been an administrative nightmare, since the System's database now has

to carry details on whether each student has taken courses that will trigger the credit ceiling.

A similar approach: restrict the state subsidy to cover funding only for a student's first undergraduate degree or limit the number of credits the state will subsidize. Students entering Montana public four-year institutions this fall will be limited to 150 hours of subsidized tuition levels. In Minnesota, students who enroll for more than 45 quarter hours beyond what is needed for a bachelor's degree cannot be counted as residents. The Oregon State Board of Education initially proposed to charge out-of-state rates to resident students who took more than 24 credits beyond what was required, but it dropped its plan after research found its assumptions to be flawed. California legislated a "duplicate degree charge" assessed on students enrolled for a second degree at the same or lower level, but the law was allowed to expire after community college enrollment plunged by 150,000. **These approaches have not been tried in Maryland.**

Academic Policies

These are efforts to tailor the academic procedures, programs and structures of an institution to impact positively on a student's degree progress.

Reach articulation agreements with high schools

Colleges and universities can encourage high schools to offer such programs as advanced placement, dual enrollments, early admissions, and the College Level Examination Program. Institutions also can adopt explicit policies for accepting credits earned through acceleration mechanisms. This is a popular strategy which is in place in 20 of the 27 states in the survey. A few even require school districts and postsecondary institutions to develop articulation agreements that include this option. **Maryland is a national leader in the use of advanced placement. Gifted and talented high school students have been able to take advantage of dual enrollment programs, particularly at community colleges.**

Increase emphasis on academic advising

Pre-college orientation, even as early as middle school, can be provided to ensure that students take courses that will allow them to prepare adequately for higher education. After enrolling in college, students can be given accurate and timely advice to help them select a major, plan their academic program, and determine their progress toward a degree. Most of the states in the survey (17 of 27) are seeking to improve academic counseling as a time-to-degree strategy. **Maryland students, in both high school and college, receive counseling on academic preparation. But advising students is not a highly rewarded activity for faculty. The Commission, in cooperation with parents, the public schools and the business community, piloted the Maryland**

National Early Intervention Scholarship and Partnership program. This initiative, which has received federal grant support, seeks to make students aware of the value of higher education, the range of institutions available, financial aid opportunities, and the high school courses needed to gain admission to and achieve success in college.

Increase course availability

Efficient course scheduling and adequate sections of required courses are important in ensuring that students graduate in a timely manner. When students are unable to enroll in courses they need to meet degree requirements, they may take extra courses that cost the taxpayers money and delay graduation. Fourteen of the 27 states surveyed are working on this issue. The number of courses can be increased by:

- Offering sections of high demand courses through distance learning. **Maryland has expanded the use of distance learning and other educational technologies. The Maryland Higher Education Commission received the report and recommendations of a consultant it retained to study the coordination and planning of distance education in states with well-developed programs and to make recommendations to the Commission on its responsibilities in this area.**

- Providing more rewards to faculty for teaching. Institutions can gain more flexibility to offer courses by persuading faculty to give additional time to teaching. In 1993, the Florida legislature appropriated $5 million to reward outstanding instruction, by providing a $5,000 award to be added to the base salary of undergraduate faculty who excelled in teaching. **While the Maryland General Assembly has required the public institutions to adopt faculty workload policies, no incentive program to encourage faculty to improve their instruction or to teach additional courses has been established.**

Establish articulation agreements among institutions on the transfer of credit

A large number of the undergraduate students enrolled at four-year institutions have transferred from a community college. In addition, many others transfer from one four-year campus to another. In the most recent survey of bachelor's degree recipients from Maryland, 56 percent of the graduates from public campuses had been transfers. Yet, studies by the National Center for Education Statistics have found that transferring from one college to another added eight months or longer to completion time for a degree. An important reason for this is loss of transfer credit. If institutions are able to reach agreements to accept the credits of other campuses, it will preclude students from having to repeat classes and delay their degree progress. This may be a reason that 22 of the 27 states in the survey are exploring the facilitation of transfer credit. **Maryland has adopted statewide Student Transfer Policies designed to solve most of the problems surrounding the transferability of credit, including general**

education courses. The University of Maryland System has developed ARTSYS, an automated database that allows students to determine the transferability of each course offered by a community college in the state. The Student Transfer Advisory Committee of the Commission has developed a strategic plan for articulation and transfer in the state.

Prepare high school students better for college

Inadequate preparation for college may an important factor in the large number of five- and six-year bachelor's degrees. One-fourth of the Maryland high school graduates who enrolled directly at a public four-year campus in the state required remedial help. Since these students must complete remedial non-credit courses before continuing with regular college-level work, they are apt to take longer to earn the baccalaureate even if they do eventually graduate. Hence, working with the secondary schools to tighten graduation requirements and to encourage students to take a college preparatory curriculum may contribute positively to time-to-degree. Fifteen of the states surveyed are pursuing this strategy. **The Maryland Partnership for Teaching and Learning K-16 plans to study ways to reduce the number of college students who require remedial assistance.**

Offer four-year graduation guarantees to students

A growing number of institutions are adopting four-year graduation plans that commit the campus to ensure that students who follow a specified set of agreements earn their degree on time. If a student meets all of the conditions of the plan but is unable to graduate due to the unavailability of a course, several options will be made available. These include substituting a different course or independent study, waiving the requirement, or allowing the student to take the course the following year tuition-free. Iowa has been at the forefront in experimenting with these types of plans, and each of their state universities has adopted it. Appendix D contains examples of four-year graduation plans at several Iowa institutions. Eight other states in the survey also have adopted or are exploring this option. **This approach has not been tried in Maryland.**

Provide mechanisms that allow students to complete a bachelor's degree in three years

Some colleges and universities provide the means to permit students facing financial pressure or desiring to enter graduate school or the workforce more quickly to complete a baccalaureate within three years rather than the traditional four. These are some approaches to accomplish this goal:

- Building accelerated degree programs around such methods as summer sessions, expanded class periods, and advanced placement. A small number of mainly liberal arts institutions have implemented three-year degree programs, mostly by restructuring the academic year to allow students to take more courses. These

programs tend to be open to academically talented students only. Five states are experimenting with three-year degree programs, but their popularity has not been widespread even though the United States is one of the few industrialized countries that has four-year baccalaureate programs. **Some independent campuses in Maryland offer accelerated undergraduate studies. All institutions counsel students about how they might obtain a degree more quickly.**

- Reducing the number of courses required for the baccalaureate so that students could finish the degree in less than four years. **This strategy, which has not attracted many adherents, has not been tried in Maryland.**

- Awarding degrees on the basis of competency attainment rather than the completion of a specific number of credit hours. **This approach, which has not been common in higher education, has not been used in Maryland.**

Incentives

These are enticements to students to encourage them to complete their programs on time or to institutions to make the necessary changes more attractive. These approaches have proven difficult to sell to state policymakers.

Provide financial rewards to students or institutions

Students can be rewarded with tuition rebates when they make use of low-demand time slots and distance learning opportunities, provided incentive awards for graduating in less than four years, and offered reduced tuition for enrolling for larger numbers of credit hours each term. Institutions can be rewarded, through the use of performance-based funding, for increases in the percentage of graduates finishing in four years or less. **Neither Maryland nor any state in the survey has applied these techniques.**

Allow credit for service learning

Students can be permitted to earn elective credit for selected volunteer service activities and life experiences. Service learning and experiences that happened prior to a student's enrollment in college also could be included in the hours needed for graduation. **Most Maryland campuses have a mechanism for recognizing prior learning experiences, although most provide only minimal credit for these activities.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Maryland has not escaped the national trend of a longer progression to a bachelor's degree. This study has found that a majority of the students who eventually graduate from a senior public campus in the state take more than four years to do it. The largest number of baccalaureates at Maryland public institutions are awarded five and even six years after matriculation. The study also confirmed, through the focus group interviews, that many factors are responsible for this phenomenon. A series of institutional, individual and environmental barriers have combined to lengthen time-to-degree, and many of these are beyond the control of students. The notion that many students are staying at college longer because they are doing too much partying or are afraid to enter the "real world" is a serious misconception.

Accordingly, the recommendations that follow are addressed to Maryland's public four-year colleges and universities and their governing boards. To the extent that policy actions can address and ameliorate the time-to-degree problem, the institutions are best suited to handle them. While the state can play a supporting role, this is primarily a campus concern and the solutions should be initiated and implemented there.

1. **Colleges and universities should consider four-year graduation guarantees.**

A growing number of states are looking into these arrangements, which are basically contracts between students and their institutions. The college commits to providing students with availability to the courses they need to finish a baccalaureate in four years (or providing a reasonable alternative if this is not possible) and to supplying them with experienced academic advising and financial aid counseling throughout their enrollment. The student commits to complete all requirements for graduation within four years and to take the necessary course hours each semester to accomplish this objective. With this agreement, an institution essentially says to its students, "We want you to finish in four years, and we are going to help you do it." Despite the lip service that campuses give to this mantra in its catalogs, few have actually taken steps to see that it happens. A four-year graduation guarantee would do just this. Interested institutions can turn to the state colleges and universities in Iowa for a model of how to make this arrangement work.

2. **Colleges and universities should limit, with few exceptions, the number of credit hours required for a bachelor's degree to 120.**

While there are some programs that legitimately require a greater number of credit hours, most should not exceed this limit. "Credit hour creep," or the process by which

academic departments lengthen the time needed to complete a degree by adding required courses, has not been an isolated phenomenon. There is suspicion that this extra academic work is motivated by a desire to generate more funds from state appropriations rather than a conviction that students need to be better prepared.

A study by the University of Maryland System found 66 academic programs at their institutions that required more than 120 credits for graduation--28 of which were at University of Maryland Eastern Shore. The number of credits required for these programs ranged from 121 to 163. Campus wide averages for baccalaureate programs requiring more than 120 credits ranged from 123 to 132. In addition, data supplied by Morgan State University showed that a majority of the undergraduate programs offered by this institution require more than 120 hours. The number of credits required for these programs ranged from 121 to 144. All of the degree programs at St. Mary's College require completion of 128 hours. A listing of the programs from UMS and Morgan is in Appendix E. It should be noted that accreditation requirements fix the number of credits required for graduation for some programs.

A growing number of states, including nearly half of those that responded to the survey cited in this study, are imposing or considering the imposition of caps on credits required for a baccalaureate. Maryland institutions would be wise to initiate voluntary reviews of the graduation requirements of their programs to head off calls for legislative action.

3. **Colleges and universities should moderate the rate of increase in full-time resident tuition, as well as increase the amount of institutional financial aid.**

The limited amount of scholarly research that has been done about factors influencing time-to-degree has consistently found financial need to be a very important barrier. This reason also was cited by participants in the focus group interviews. If federal and state budget cuts result in insufficient student aid resources, many students will take even longer to earn their degrees because they will have to make up the revenues by working. The only alternative would be increases in financial assistance provided by institutions and private sources.

The continued rise of tuition at levels beyond the cost of living has exacerbated this problem. A study by the University of Maryland System made this observation: "As average UMS tuition and fees have increased faster than financial aid awards per recipient, the real cost of education to students has gone up. Between FY 1991 and FY 1994, the UMS average full-time resident undergraduate tuition and fees have risen by 33 percent. Over the same period, financial aid awards per unduplicated undergraduate recipients increased by only 28 percent."

4. **Campuses should provide students with an experienced advisor at their initial registration to map out a four-year course plan and, prior to registration each subsequent semester, to review the course selections already completed and those necessary for the following term.**

Greater focus on long-term academic planning would benefit students who want to complete their degree in four years. Such an exercise, if done properly at freshman orientation, would provide students with an academic "road map" that they could rely on to gauge their progress. It also would lessen student dependence on ad hoc advising with which many in the focus group interviews found to be unsatisfactory.

5. **Campuses should take advantage of distance learning and other technologies to offer additional sections of high demand courses. This will often involve joint efforts with other campuses and with the state.**

The focus group interviews produced complaints from students who said they were unable to graduate on time because they were closed out of required courses. Often budget constraints limit the number of times that mandatory courses can be offered. Therefore, institutions need to consider the use of innovative approaches to provide the instruction that students need to complete their degree. For example, the University of South Florida is giving engineering students greater access to core courses through a distance learning consortium sponsored by several state universities. In addition to the challenges posed by implementing the technology, institutions need to ensure that the quality of distance learning offerings equal those provided by traditional instruction.

6. **Campuses should collaborate more closely with high schools to identify ways in which students can earn college credit prior to matriculation. This might involve a) establishing clear guidelines for awarding credit through such programs as advanced placement, CLEP and portfolio assessment and b) increasing the number of high school students who concurrently enroll in college courses for credit.**

Although there is no empirical evidence to suggest that students who earn credits before entering college graduate any faster than others, it still provides an enterprising method of accelerating degree progress. But there does not appear to be much consistency across institutions in using this approach. Although Maryland public four-year institutions accept credits for course alternatives like CLEP or advanced placement, the maximum number awarded varies among campuses. Within the University of Maryland System, for example, the maximum alternative course credit ranged from 24 to 60.

APPENDIX A

TRENDS IN GRADUATION RATES
MARYLAND PUBLIC FOUR YEAR CAMPUSES

Table 1

Trends in Graduation Rates
MARYLAND PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

All Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	26.0	20.0	8.4	39.6	3.8	46.7
1981	28.1	18.9	8.9	39.5	4.0	46.8
1982	27.7	20.0	8.5	41.0	3.8	48.6
1983	29.5	19.4	9.3	40.7	3.9	48.0
1984	31.1	20.5	9.9	44.1	4.2	52.1
1985	32.3	22.0	9.8	45.6	4.2	53.9
1986	32.9	22.1	9.8	47.5	4.2	55.8
1987	33.2	23.4	10.0	48.2	4.0	56.3
1988	33.3	24.8	9.8	50.1	4.0	57.8
1989	34.5	24.5	9.8	50.4	4.5	58.2
1990	33.4	23.6	10.7	47.7		
1991	32.6	24.3				

African-American Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	27.7	8.9	12.5	20.6	5.9	25.7
1981	29.3	9.2	12.8	20.8	7.0	26.1
1982	29.4	8.7	13.0	21.2	7.6	26.8
1983	30.0	9.4	14.1	22.1	6.9	27.5
1984	34.0	8.7	15.0	22.7	9.3	29.7
1985	34.5	10.6	15.8	25.2	8.5	32.2
1986	37.1	10.0	16.9	26.9	9.3	34.5
1987	35.6	12.3	16.6	28.5	8.6	35.6
1988	38.9	13.0	17.2	31.4	5.3	39.5
1989	39.9	12.0	12.0	31.9	7.2	39.1
1990	34.2	11.5	14.9	29.9		
1991	32.9	14.4				

Source: MHEC Enrollment and Degree Information Systems

Table 2

Trends in Graduation Rates
BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

All Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	24.3	8.2	7.2	24.0	1.7	28.1
1981	19.9	6.4	6.0	19.6	4.6	21.3
1982	20.8	7.5	10.2	17.7	7.5	21.6
1983	26.1	6.4	14.3	16.4	4.3	23.6
1984	29.1	6.6	14.0	20.6	5.0	28.0
1985	27.7	7.3	13.7	17.0	6.7	22.0
1986	38.2	9.2	18.2	24.2	9.9	31.2
1987	32.2	9.3	18.9	22.6	10.3	28.2
1988	35.8	11.3	15.0	25.1	5.8	33.2
1989	35.7	9.2	15.0	29.1	8.0	36.7
1990	32.1	7.6	15.1	26.9		
1991	37.6	11.7				

African-American Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	25.8	8.0	7.6	25.0	1.9	29.5
1981	21.7	6.3	5.9	20.6	4.0	22.2
1982	24.0	6.0	11.5	17.5	7.8	21.7
1983	27.1	5.8	15.0	16.3	5.0	23.7
1984	33.0	5.7	16.0	21.7	5.2	30.2
1985	29.0	6.7	13.8	17.1	6.3	22.7
1986	38.0	9.0	17.1	25.1	9.1	32.0
1987	34.2	9.0	20.1	22.3	10.4	28.5
1988	37.5	10.1	15.3	24.1	5.9	32.9
1989	37.6	9.0	14.9	28.9	8.4	37.1
1990	34.2	8.1	15.9	28.4		
1991	38.5	11.8				

Source: MHEC Enrollment and Degree Information Systems

Table 3

Trends in Graduation Rates
COPPIN STATE COLLEGE

All Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	17.0	3.1	9.5	8.1	6.7	12.0
1981	19.7	3.5	13.2	9.8	7.6	12.9
1982	17.2	3.1	12.7	6.2	7.6	10.4
1983	19.1	2.5	11.1	9.2	5.9	13.9
1984	27.1	2.1	14.5	11.0	9.1	16.1
1985	21.9	3.5	15.0	9.2	6.5	13.1
1986	27.4	2.0	19.0	8.5	8.5	19.4
1987	23.9	6.4	12.8	14.5	6.8	19.6
1988	38.2	3.4	21.7	17.4	11.1	24.6
1989	32.0	2.7	17.6	12.6	13.1	17.6
1990	34.2	3.9	16.1	16.4		
1991	31.2	9.6				

African-American Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	17.4	2.9	9.9	7.9	6.7	12.0
1981	20.1	3.4	13.3	9.6	8.2	12.7
1982	18.1	3.4	12.1	6.9	7.8	10.6
1983	19.2	1.9	10.8	8.7	6.6	12.4
1984	25.4	1.8	13.3	10.0	9.1	14.5
1985	23.0	3.4	15.3	9.8	6.8	13.6
1986	27.4	1.8	19.2	8.2	9.1	18.8
1987	25.7	3.8	13.8	12.4	7.1	17.6
1988	38.6	3.7	22.8	16.9	11.6	24.9
1989	34.7	1.5	19.4	11.7	14.8	17.3
1990	36.2	3.6	17.4	16.5		
1991	33.3	9.4				

Source: MHEC Enrollment and Degree Information Systems

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Table 4

Trends in Graduation Rates
FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

All Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	13.5	24.4	2.7	43.4	1.1	47.5
1981	19.7	29.4	2.4	51.1	0.6	57.1
1982	16.0	28.6	3.3	50.9	0.8	58.0
1983	17.5	24.8	3.3	43.3	1.7	48.0
1984	21.8	23.4	4.2	47.0	0.8	54.5
1985	23.5	21.1	4.1	47.4	1.9	54.0
1986	25.6	29.0	5.0	51.6	0.9	58.3
1987	26.7	25.2	4.6	51.5	1.3	57.7
1988	29.2	24.3	5.9	51.8	2.2	57.6
1989	30.1	27.0	6.6	54.2	1.7	62.5
1990	32.8	26.4	5.8	56.6		
1991	29.4	25.8				

African-American Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	16.3	10.0	3.8	25.1	1.3	30.1
1981	25.8	7.6	3.0	30.3	0.0	43.9
1982	21.1	14.1	4.2	43.6	1.4	50.7
1983	22.6	15.5	2.4	35.8	0.0	41.7
1984	20.7	18.9	5.2	39.7	0.0	48.3
1985	18.2	13.0	3.9	31.2	2.6	41.6
1986	25.4	8.5	8.5	30.5	3.4	40.7
1987	39.2	6.8	8.1	39.2	2.7	51.3
1988	33.3	8.0	4.6	37.9	1.1	44.8
1989	36.5	10.6	10.6	33.0	4.7	40.0
1990	31.1	16.0	6.6	47.2		
1991	32.0	9.3				

Source: MHEC Enrollment and Degree Information Systems

Table 5

Trends in Graduation Rates
SALISBURY STATE UNIVERSITY

All Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	18.0	25.0	6.0	41.4	3.1	46.3
1981	22.4	24.2	5.3	43.0	2.7	47.9
1982	22.0	24.2	4.7	43.6	1.8	47.9
1983	19.4	25.4	5.1	42.7	2.6	47.8
1984	24.0	28.1	4.9	50.1	2.1	55.0
1985	22.5	29.7	5.9	51.9	2.8	56.6
1986	24.5	29.2	8.3	48.6	4.7	54.6
1987	23.2	38.2	6.5	58.2	2.4	64.9
1988	26.0	35.2	4.8	58.8	1.3	63.6
1989	24.2	41.3	5.0	64.1	2.6	69.2
1990	20.1	43.3	5.3	60.8		
1991	20.7	42.7				

African-American Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	26.7	15.0	10.0	30.0	3.3	33.3
1981	19.5	26.8	7.3	39.0	4.9	39.0
1982	26.2	21.4	4.8	38.1	4.8	42.9
1983	19.1	17.0	2.1	36.2	0.0	40.5
1984	29.2	20.8	2.1	37.5	2.1	43.8
1985	50.0	21.9	6.3	62.5	3.1	65.6
1986	31.0	10.3	20.7	27.6	10.3	34.4
1987	29.6	20.4	16.7	35.2	5.6	46.3
1988	30.8	9.2	9.2	27.7	1.5	35.4
1989	26.7	28.4	5.0	50.0	1.7	55.0
1990	33.3	26.2	11.9	50.0		
1991	32.4	13.5				

Source: MHEC Enrollment and Degree Information Systems

Table 6

Trends in Graduation Rates
TOWSON STATE UNIVERSITY

All Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	28.5	16.6	8.8	34.1	4.7	40.2
1981	28.9	16.4	9.3	34.8	5.0	41.3
1982	28.6	18.1	10.1	36.9	4.8	43.5
1983	32.5	19.6	9.3	41.2	4.9	47.8
1984	33.5	22.1	8.2	49.0	4.3	55.6
1985	35.2	24.4	8.8	51.8	4.0	59.1
1986	36.3	23.9	9.0	53.7	4.5	60.7
1987	39.5	24.4	10.3	53.9	4.5	62.6
1988	37.8	28.6	10.8	57.7	3.9	66.2
1989	37.8	28.9	8.6	58.4	3.2	66.3
1990	40.9	25.5	9.8	56.0		
1991	36.1	25.5				

African-American Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	29.4	7.9	10.9	18.7	3.4	25.6
1981	29.0	4.8	10.7	16.5	4.5	22.4
1982	29.0	5.1	14.0	17.8	7.0	23.8
1983	33.9	12.0	10.7	31.3	3.9	37.3
1984	38.9	10.9	9.3	28.5	8.8	38.8
1985	33.3	19.5	9.0	36.1	5.6	47.9
1986	35.1	17.6	11.5	44.3	5.3	51.2
1987	38.8	19.0	14.9	38.0	10.7	48.8
1988	37.4	21.1	13.6	51.0	2.7	59.8
1989	46.0	13.7	10.6	46.6	3.7	56.5
1990	50.0	14.5	13.7	45.2		
1991	40.0	15.0				

Source: MHEC Enrollment and Degree Information Systems

Table 7

Trends in Graduation Rates
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND BALTIMORE COUNTY

All Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	21.3	19.3	7.5	39.2	3.6	48.3
1981	23.8	15.5	8.7	35.5	4.4	44.1
1982	24.5	16.5	8.8	36.7	4.0	48.4
1983	26.1	17.2	8.7	40.8	3.7	50.7
1984	26.9	17.6	10.2	42.1	4.1	52.8
1985	28.2	18.6	9.4	43.5	4.4	53.9
1986	28.4	14.8	9.8	39.3	4.2	50.1
1987	31.4	17.3	10.5	45.3	4.1	55.7
1988	32.9	17.7	10.5	46.3	4.6	55.5
1989	37.9	19.7	12.0	47.2	5.4	57.3
1990	35.5	19.0	12.5	47.2		
1991	33.4	21.2				

African-American Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	23.6	8.8	6.9	25.0	3.7	31.0
1981	26.2	3.5	8.1	17.4	5.2	26.7
1982	28.6	4.6	8.7	25.5	3.6	31.1
1983	28.3	9.2	9.8	28.3	3.5	36.9
1984	32.3	9.5	10.1	32.3	3.8	39.8
1985	41.9	8.2	11.6	32.0	4.7	41.3
1986	27.9	7.6	11.0	25.5	8.1	34.3
1987	33.9	9.2	15.3	30.6	6.6	40.4
1988	34.7	10.7	11.7	33.2	6.6	42.4
1989	37.2	15.2	14.5	38.7	6.2	48.3
1990	47.3	13.0	17.2	36.7		
1991	39.2	21.7				

Source: MHEC Enrollment and Degree Information Systems

Table 8

Trends in Graduation Rates
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COLLEGE PARK

All Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	33.5	23.2	10.6	48.3	4.2	56.8
1981	36.5	21.7	11.1	48.7	4.5	58.3
1982	36.4	23.4	10.2	50.6	4.2	59.9
1983	37.6	21.8	11.5	48.5	4.1	58.0
1984	37.2	23.0	12.1	50.6	4.6	60.1
1985	40.0	21.9	12.1	51.2	4.6	61.4
1986	39.6	25.1	10.7	56.0	4.0	65.5
1987	38.8	24.2	11.7	52.4	4.4	61.9
1988	37.5	27.1	10.4	55.8	4.5	64.3
1989	40.2	25.7	11.2	56.6	4.9	65.9
1990	35.9	26.3	11.6	52.6		
1991	38.6	25.6				

African-American Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	28.4	9.3	11.1	26.2	3.8	33.7
1981	29.6	11.7	10.2	29.4	4.2	38.3
1982	33.4	8.7	11.3	29.0	4.6	39.6
1983	34.6	8.8	13.9	27.2	4.6	36.1
1984	34.6	10.6	14.2	28.1	5.5	39.7
1985	35.9	12.1	15.0	31.8	4.9	42.6
1986	39.3	10.3	11.8	35.3	4.7	45.2
1987	37.2	12.0	14.6	34.3	5.9	43.1
1988	39.5	12.1	14.1	36.3	7.1	47.0
1989	43.7	12.3	14.4	38.2	8.8	48.5
1990	38.4	13.4	17.4	34.6		
1991	39.0	14.8				

Source: MHEC Enrollment and Degree Information Systems

Table 9

Trends in Graduation Rates
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE

All Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	14.5	12.7	3.5	24.2	1.3	28.5
1981	16.2	13.5	6.3	26.4	2.0	31.4
1982	19.2	14.0	5.3	26.8	3.0	33.6
1983	14.7	14.7	6.9	25.7	4.5	28.5
1984	16.7	5.5	5.5	14.6	2.2	20.0
1985	23.0	9.5	9.1	19.2	2.8	28.4
1986	18.5	8.4	5.1	18.2	1.8	23.7
1987	20.8	9.3	5.3	23.3	1.9	28.3
1988	19.6	15.3	3.8	29.4	1.4	35.8
1989	18.4	11.3	5.6	25.6	2.3	31.4
1990	22.7	14.0	5.5	26.5		
1991	19.7	14.3				

African-American Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	15.1	7.0	3.8	19.4	1.6	24.3
1981	18.9	11.3	7.6	24.3	2.5	30.2
1982	21.9	12.1	5.6	25.5	3.3	32.6
1983	15.7	12.6	7.6	22.7	4.0	25.8
1984	17.9	5.5	6.0	15.1	2.8	21.1
1985	23.9	9.9	8.8	20.5	2.9	28.7
1986	21.8	7.9	5.7	18.7	2.2	25.4
1987	23.1	7.8	6.3	23.9	2.0	30.2
1988	20.7	16.2	4.0	30.6	1.3	36.4
1989	20.0	10.9	5.5	26.4	2.9	31.9
1990	22.8	14.3	6.2	26.5		
1991	21.8	14.2				

Source: MHEC Enrollment and Degree Information Systems

Table 11

Trends in Graduation Rates
MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

All Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	17.2	12.5	7.2	20.5	3.1	24.0
1981	20.8	12.7	7.5	21.2	2.4	25.3
1982	18.1	10.6	5.3	19.3	2.6	23.3
1983	19.0	11.8	7.0	21.6	2.7	24.7
1984	23.4	9.9	9.6	21.2	6.1	25.5
1985	24.3	10.9	8.8	23.7	5.6	27.1
1986	25.5	12.4	10.1	25.6	6.1	30.6
1987	25.2	16.5	10.5	28.5	4.5	33.5
1988	31.5	14.0	14.3	29.4	5.4	36.2
1989	33.0	12.6	11.7	29.8	7.6	35.4
1990	31.7	9.8	17.2	25.8		
1991	32.0	14.4				

African-American Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	17.5	11.5	7.3	19.8	2.9	23.5
1981	21.4	12.3	7.7	21.0	2.5	25.2
1982	18.3	10.7	5.1	19.6	2.7	23.4
1983	19.6	11.5	7.3	21.3	2.8	24.5
1984	24.2	9.7	9.9	21.3	6.1	25.7
1985	24.8	10.9	8.9	24.2	5.9	27.7
1986	26.0	12.8	10.3	26.0	6.2	31.2
1987	25.5	16.6	10.6	28.8	4.7	33.9
1988	32.0	14.0	14.4	29.9	5.5	36.6
1989	33.0	12.8	11.9	30.0	7.8	35.6
1990	32.4	9.8	17.6	26.2		
1991	32.3	14.5				

Source: MHEC Enrollment and Degree Information Systems

Table 12

Trends in Graduation Rates
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE

All Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	9.5	31.7	2.6	47.4	1.0	51.6
1981	9.4	29.4	2.5	44.2	0.6	50.8
1982	15.3	31.3	3.1	47.9	1.3	53.4
1983	17.7	34.3	5.7	49.8	2.8	55.2
1984	15.9	34.4	3.3	48.9	1.1	56.2
1985	13.8	44.6	1.6	62.7	0.3	67.3
1986	17.0	45.7	1.8	65.9	0.4	69.5
1987	18.6	49.6	0.8	72.5	0.4	74.4
1988	16.6	54.4	1.6	73.1	0.6	77.8
1989	17.5	58.8	3.6	75.3	0.9	78.0
1990	15.3	63.1	1.9	76.6		
1991	10.1	66.1				

African-American Students

Percent enrolled at **original** campus or graduated from **any** campus after:

	Four Years		Five Years		Six Years	
Cohort	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated
1980	25.0	50.0	0.0	66.7	0.0	66.7
1981	13.3	23.3	0.0	36.6	0.0	43.4
1982	18.8	31.3	6.3	43.8	0.0	56.3
1983	6.3	43.8	0.0	50.0	0.0	56.3
1984	25.0	37.5	0.0	62.5	0.0	62.5
1985	5.9	52.9	0.0	58.8	0.0	64.7
1986	23.1	15.4	0.0	50.0	0.0	53.9
1987	22.2	33.3	0.0	61.1	0.0	61.1
1988	8.3	50.0	0.0	62.5	0.0	70.8
1989	10.3	55.1	0.0	72.4	0.0	72.4
1990	17.4	69.5	8.7	82.6		
1991	20.0	48.6				

Source: MHEC Enrollment and Degree Information Systems

Table 13

Trends in Graduation Rates of Transfer Students
MARYLAND PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

All Transfer Students

Percent graduated from any public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				51.4
1988-89			45.4	50.4
1989-90		32.0	47.2	53.7
1990-91	10.2	35.1	48.8	54.8
1991-92	10.9	33.9	47.4	
1992-93	11.1	33.3		
1993-94	10.8			

African-American Transfer Students

Percent graduated from any public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				28.2
1988-89			24.1	28.3
1989-90		17.4	31.0	39.6
1990-91	4.9	18.0	30.4	38.3
1991-92	7.1	21.1	34.5	
1992-93	7.2	21.9		
1993-94	7.2			

Source: MHEC Transfer Student System

Table 14

Trends in Graduation Rates of Transfer Students

BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

All Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				35.4
1988-89			44.6	43.8
1989-90		26.4	49.2	58.7
1990-91	2.5	24.7	42.0	49.4
1991-92	6.6	27.6	46.5	
1992-93	6.2	28.1		
1993-94	10.9			

African-American Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				46.7
1988-89			34.9	37.3
1989-90		22.1	45.1	59.3
1990-91	2.6	25.0	40.2	47.7
1991-92	6.5	24.7	43.9	
1992-93	5.6	28.1		
1993-94	13.2			

Source: MHEC Transfer Student System

Table 15

Trends in Graduation Rates of Transfer Students

COPPIN STATE COLLEGE

All Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				28.0
1988-89			20.9	25.3
1989-90		17.5	32.2	37.2
1990-91	2.4	12.7	22.3	29.8
1991-92	7.4	18.2	28.3	
1992-93	5.3	20.4		
1993-94	4.1			

African-American Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				18.5
1988-89			18.1	22.9
1989-90		13.7	27.4	34.1
1990-91	2.0	11.3	21.2	29.4
1991-92	6.6	16.7	24.7	
1992-93	5.5	19.4		
1993-94	3.7			

Source: MHEC Transfer Student System

Table 16

Trends in Graduation Rates of Transfer Students

FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

All Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				64.4
1988-89			52.4	58.7
1989-90		39.9	56.6	61.8
1990-91	15.4	41.3	58.7	61.7
1991-92	15.2	43.6	61.8	
1992-93	16.0	43.5		
1993-94	14.3			

African-American Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				*
1988-89			*	*
1989-90		20.8	45.8	54.2
1990-91	NR	6.7	6.7	6.7
1991-92	*	*	*	
1992-93	*	*		
1993-94	*			

Note: NR - data not reported

* N less than 15.

Source: MHEC Transfer Student System

Table 17

Trends in Graduation Rates of Transfer Students

SALISBURY STATE UNIVERSITY

All Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				57.7
1988-89			59.7	65.7
1989-90		37.9	59.2	62.5
1990-91	7.6	37.7	57.6	66.5
1991-92	12.5	43.6	60.9	
1992-93	15.2	45.1		
1993-94	16.0			

African-American Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				*
1988-89			*	*
1989-90		*	*	*
1990-91	*	*	*	*
1991-92	*	*	*	
1992-93	*	*		
1993-94	*			

* N less than 15.

Source: MHEC Transfer Student System

Table 18

Trends in Graduation Rates of Transfer Students
TOWSON STATE UNIVERSITY

All Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				52.9
1988-89			49.1	53.7
1989-90		37.8	52.2	57.8
1990-91	11.7	40.0	52.4	58.7
1991-92	13.9	41.9	54.3	
1992-93	14.9	45.1		
1993-94	13.5			

African-American Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				33.8
1988-89			25.4	27.1
1989-90		15.9	22.6	32.3
1990-91	6.5	27.3	36.4	42.3
1991-92	6.0	25.4	33.8	
1992-93	14.5	33.9		
1993-94	13.6			

Source: MHEC Transfer Student System

Table 19

Trends in Graduation Rates of Transfer Students

UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE

All Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				48.7
1988-89			43.2	47.7
1989-90		36.2	50.2	57.1
1990-91	15.0	39.8	50.1	55.6
1991-92	15.9	43.6	53.3	
1992-93	13.8	38.1		
1993-94	12.8			

African-American Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				22.2
1988-89			17.0	21.3
1989-90		15.9	33.1	41.1
1990-91	3.2	14.4	28.8	34.1
1991-92	6.4	25.7	38.5	
1992-93	9.3	27.5		
1993-94	3.3			

Source: MHEC Transfer Student System

Table 20

Trends in Graduation Rates of Transfer Students
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND BALTIMORE CITY

All Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				91.4
1988-89			80.8	81.1
1989-90		84.1	93.1	93.1
1990-91	52.5	87.5	90.7	92.5
1991-92	59.1	89.6	94.9	
1992-93	49.5	81.5		
1993-94	71.6			

African-American Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				*
1988-89			*	*
1989-90		*	*	*
1990-91	*	*	*	*
1991-92	*	*	*	
1992-93	40.0	53.3		
1993-94	44.4			

* N less than 15.

Source: MHEC Transfer Student System

Table 21

Trends in Graduation Rates of Transfer Students
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND BALTIMORE COUNTY

All Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				45.2
1988-89			45.2	48.6
1989-90		28.6	39.2	50.2
1990-91	10.5	31.1	44.6	51.9
1991-92	9.1	28.0	39.8	
1992-93	9.0	25.7		
1993-94	8.3			

African-American Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				26.3
1988-89			28.6	32.9
1989-90		17.7	26.6	31.6
1990-91	5.1	12.8	21.8	30.8
1991-92	6.4	17.3	29.7	
1992-93	5.9	17.5		
1993-94	5.7			

Source: MHEC Transfer Student System

Table 22

Trends in Graduation Rates of Transfer Students
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COLLEGE PARK

All Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				51.0
1988-89			52.9	59.9
1989-90		32.6	53.9	59.8
1990-91	7.0	40.9	57.5	62.2
1991-92	9.6	36.6	54.3	
1992-93	10.1	36.1		
1993-94	8.1			

African-American Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				32.4
1988-89			32.7	38.9
1989-90		21.6	36.0	41.4
1990-91	5.8	26.2	39.8	43.7
1991-92	10.2	30.6	48.4	
1992-93	12.4	31.4		
1993-94	5.2			

Source: MHEC Transfer Student System

Table 23

Trends in Graduation Rates of Transfer Students
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE

All Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				52.9
1988-89			35.7	45.2
1989-90		29.5	44.4	52.4
1990-91	14.5	20.0	36.5	49.1
1991-92	4.0	29.0	40.4	
1992-93	8.5	33.3		
1993-94	14.5			

African-American Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				23.5
1988-89			20.0	40.0
1989-90		15.0	28.6	42.1
1990-91	2.5	7.3	27.8	42.9
1991-92	2.8	13.3	20.8	
1992-93	NR	20.7		
1993-94	NR			

Note: NR - data not reported.

Source: MHEC Transfer Student System

Table 24

Trends in Graduation Rates of Transfer Students
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

All Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				NA
1988-89			20.6	25.1
1989-90		12.7	20.5	24.9
1990-91	6.5	15.3	24.5	30.6
1991-92	4.7	14.3	24.6	
1992-93	4.5	13.8		
1993-94	7.5			

African-American Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				NA
1988-89			17.9	20.0
1989-90		11.5	18.0	23.4
1990-91	5.7	15.2	25.7	33.3
1991-92	5.2	13.2	25.0	
1992-93	3.8	10.5		
1993-94	5.5			

Source: MHEC Transfer Student System

Table 25

Trends in Graduation Rates of Transfer Students

MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

All Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				18.2
1988-89			26.5	27.5
1989-90		24.2	32.6	51.6
1990-91	9.9	16.5	33.9	48.3
1991-92	9.9	25.3	42.9	
1992-93	8.4	26.5		
1993-94	3.0			

African-American Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				10.0
1988-89			26.2	27.4
1989-90		18.1	27.8	48.6
1990-91	9.5	17.1	34.3	47.6
1991-92	7.5	18.8	38.8	
1992-93	7.4	26.5		
1993-94	1.7			

Source: MHEC Transfer Student System

Table 26

Trends in Graduation Rates of Transfer Students
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE

All Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				62.1
1988-89			59.7	64.5
1989-90		56.1	65.2	68.2
1990-91	5.8	42.3	61.5	69.2
1991-92	6.2	63.1	75.4	
1992-93	15.7	47.1		
1993-94	6.1			

African-American Transfer Students

Percent graduated from this public four-year campus after:

Cohort	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
1987-88				*
1988-89			*	*
1990-91		*	*	*
1990-91	*	*	*	*
1991-92	NA	NA	NA	
1992-93	*	*		
1993-94	*			

* N less than 15.

Source: MHEC Transfer Student System

APPENDIX B

SUMMARY TABLES: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

Summary Table: Barriers to Completing Higher Education in a Timely Manner			
School	**Institutional Barriers**	**Environmental Barriers**	**Personal Barriers**
Bowie	Poor advising system Financial Aid and loan process difficult Lack of grants and scholarships No "set way of doing things" - no plan Unrealistic expectations of time to finish Institutional expectations don't fit student's circumstances No choice of faculty Difficulty understanding some faculty Tutoring difficult to obtain Takes too long to get on track Catalog requirements difficult to understand	Location - Commuting makes classes difficult Class scheduling inconvenient for commuters Class schedules and public transportation schedules don't match No shuttle to MARC station Parking facilities are inadequate for commuters Safety for night classes	Stress - family problem and responsibilities Pressure to graduate from families Negative peer pressure Financial problems - have to work Not prepared to make good choices when young Don't appreciate consequences of decisions
Frostburg	Lost credits due to transfer policies Last 30 credit hour rule - must take at FSU Availability of professors for upper division classes Class scheduling is problem Quality of academic and career advising (poor quality) Financial assistance - a lot of wrong information Students staff offices - students aren't trained and advice is often wrong Required attendance policy poses difficulties for some Little sympathy for non-traditional students	People who need jobs can't get them Lack of jobs in community for students Family and outside pressure Bleak future "What is there to look forward to when you get out."	"Comfort Zone" - not wanting to leaving school Don't know what you need to transition from HS to college and from college to life Unprepared for freedom of school. Something always going on (party) People try to get by without buying books (expense)

Summary Table: Barriers to Completing Higher Education in a Timely Manner			
School	**Institutional Barriers**	**Environmental Barriers**	**Personal Barriers**
Morgan	Registration difficulties Needed classes not open or not offered Instructors not available for classes Classes dropped without notification Seniors lack registration priority Credit creep-- majors requiring additional credits Advisors not well informed about requirements Advisors too busy for students Program changes not communicated Evening students have disadvantage (no administrative setup - classes not offered) Inconsistent application of transfer policies -- credits initially accepted are rejected Official paperwork arrives too late Poor record keeping Senior audits are done too late to help plan Deans have authority to accept/reject classes - substitutions etc., but they are never available to see students Tutoring during the day (not available in evening) Parking-evening students not allowed to park during days when advisors are available.	Lack of a sense of community Expectations of community not fulfilled	Party/social activities Switching majors results in lost credits Need to work (most working full-time/part-time)

Summary Table: Barriers to Completing Higher Education in a Timely Manner			
School	**Institutional Barriers**	**Environmental Barriers**	**Personal Barriers**
Towson	Lack of qualified advisor in early stages Advisors have no "enthusiasm" for job Scarcity of required courses on weekends/ nights Limited summer offering Credit creep - extra credits required by majors Degree requirements unclear in catalog Insufficient time to choose and poor advise during initial enrollment Lack of career guidance in early stages Faculty pushed into areas where they lack expertise - advising too much to do. No rewards for good advisors	Family responsibility reduces flexibility for non-traditional students No individuation -- tailoring for circumstances Need to work to raise money Expenses on family GPA competition results in taking more classes to drive up GPA (often wasted classes) Conflict between TSU as a business and needs of students.	Switching majors drives up credits Switching from part-time to full-time Extra curricular activities Need for personal growth
UMBC	Time of day required courses are offered Frequency of required courses Unavailability of classes for fresh and soph. Lack of mentoring/advising Lack of personalized advising (mass advising) Advisement center doesn't know specific needs of major-- produces errors Number of faculty members not adequate for majors. (i.e., lack of faculty means not enough faculty to offer full curriculum Transfer credit issues - losing credits, misclassified credits Financial aid process is convenient for institution but not for students Credit creep in some majors. Difficulties of upper division courses make high course load unrealistic	Cooperative education and internships cut into ability to take classes Need to work Family pressures and responsibilities Stress factors associated with - Work - Raising family - Scholarship requirement (GPA) Family needs conflict with course offerings. Pressure to maintaining GPA due to job competition, scholarship demands, or personal satisfaction	Changing majors or adding minor Unclear of direction when entering college Switching schools

Summary Table: Barriers to Completing Higher Education in a Timely Manner			
School	**Institutional Barriers**	**Environmental Barriers**	**Personal Barriers**
UMCP	Not enough classes Too many people for number of spaces Lack of advising for career or classes Number of credits per semester limited by college policy due to budget cuts Lack of quality help in tutoring Lack of availability of tutoring No off-hour help - i.e., nights, weekends when students are working on homework TA's can't speak clear English Professors are inaccessible Career advising not available Five year plans for some majors Credit creep Lack of guidance about job path	Dorms too loud with too many distractions Hard to get workstations Have to wait long time for computers Anxiety about future/career Cooperative education adds to time in college People who work can't make load too heavy	Consequences of initial "Burst of Freedom" Needed a dose of reality about career field Credit card debt → financial problems Money management problems Switching majors Switching schools

APPENDIX C

ACTIONS TAKEN BY STATES ON TIME TO DEGREE

Actions Taken by States on Time-to-Degree

	Imposing Tuition Surcharges/Other Financial Incentives	Providing Financial Incentives to Reward Students	Limiting Credits Required for the Baccalaureate	Increasing Availability of Required Courses	Improving Academic Counseling	Providing 4-year Degree Guarantees	Offering 3-year Degree Programs	Facilitating Transfer of Credit	Enabling High School Students to Earn College Credit	Working with High Schools to Better Prepare Students	Conducting Time-to-Degree Study
Alabama								X			X
Alaska			X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Arizona			X								X
Arkansas								X	X	X	
California	X										
Florida	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Georgia			X	X	X			X	X	X	
Hawaii					X			X		X	
Illinois				X	X		X	X	X	X	
Iowa				X	X	X		X	X	X	
Kansas			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Kentucky								X	X		
Maryland					X			X	X	X	X
Minnesota	X			X	X			X	X		
Montana	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Nebraska			X								
New Mexico					X			X			
New York			X						X		
North Carolina	X		X	X	X			X	X		
Oregon			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
South Carolina								X			X
South Dakota				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Virginia			X					X	X	X	
Washington				X	X	X		X	X		X
West Virginia			X	X				X	X	X	
Wisconsin			X	X	X	X			X	X	
Wyoming					X			X	X	X	

Source: SHEEO

APPENDIX D

FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION GUARANTEE PLANS
IOWA UNIVERSITIES

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION PLAN

Students enter Iowa State University with diverse abilities, interests and educational goals. The University has long been committed to helping students develop their potential, expand their interests and reach their educational goals in a timely way. Academic advisers help all students plan their degree programs, select courses, register for classes and monitor their progress. The Four-Year Graduation Plan has been developed as a way to help students who want to graduate within four years. Students who choose to participate in the Four-Year Graduation Plan will work closely with their advisers to meet the requirements for completing the degree for their major in four years. Students who follow the conditions of the plan will be assured that the courses needed for graduation will be available. The academic curricula are outlined on eight-semester planning templates available from the academic departments.

The student in the Four-Year Graduation Plan assumes the responsibility for term-by-term monitoring of progress toward the bachelor's degree in consultation with the academic adviser. Iowa State University offers over one hundred curricula in seven undergraduate colleges. All but two of these programs, architecture and landscape architecture, may be completed in four years. ISU's Four-Year programs require from 120.5 to 143.5 credits for a bachelor's degree; therefore, the Four-Year Graduation Plan student must average between 15 and 18 credits per semester.

Iowa State University assumes responsibility for providing the academic advising services and degree-audit mechanisms to assist the student in accurately monitoring progress toward graduation. ISU is also responsible for providing class space in the courses required for the student's respective major in order to complete the bachelor's degree within eight consecutive semesters.

Many students elect to extend their studies at Iowa State University to take advantage of research and employment opportunities, certificate or minor programs, or to pursue specialized plans of study tailored to unique career goals. These plans may require more than eight semesters to complete. Other students extend their studies at Iowa State due to family commitments, financial or personal circumstances. Some students may need to extend their studies to strengthen their academic background for their chosen curriculum. Situations and plans may also change as a student progresses toward graduation. Students who sign the Four-Year Graduation Plan and then determine that they need more time to graduate, may cancel their participation without penalty. Those students who decide that the Four-Year Graduation Plan does not meet their academic and/or personal goals are encouraged to develop, in consultation with their academic adviser, a plan and timetable for completing the courses in their curriculum that will allow them to achieve their individual academic, career, professional and personal aspirations within a reasonable period of time.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION PLAN

By signing below, I agree to participate in the Iowa State University Four-Year Graduation Plan. The university makes a commitment that graduation in four years will not be delayed by the unavailability of courses.

General conditions I will satisfy:

1. Enter the university as a first-year student.
2. Choose a major that qualifies for the four-year plan.
3. Have the preparation to begin a four-year plan in my major at entry to the university.
4. Stay on track by completing a minimum of one quarter of the applicable credits, in the prescribed sequence, for my degree program each year, including summer session(s).
5. Meet with an academic adviser prior to my assigned registration time each semester and discuss my progress toward graduation.
6. Enroll in available courses needed for my degree program, with the understanding that specific courses may not be available at the time or the semester in which I would prefer to take them.
7. Change majors or enroll in additional minors or programs only if, at the time I change, the additional requirements can be met within the original four-year period.
8. Accept responsibility for monitoring my progress and acting on advice given by my adviser so that I stay on track toward graduation in four years.
9. Register for succeeding semesters within 24 hours of my assigned registration start time.
10. Remain in good academic standing as determined by the department, college, and university.
11. Accept responsibility for timely annual application for financial assistance.
12. Notify the Provost in writing, during the touch-tone registration period prior to the term when the course is needed, that graduation may be delayed due to unavailability of a course.

General Conditions Iowa State University will satisfy:

1. Provide a knowledgeable academic adviser at the initial registration and before registration each subsequent semester to review course selections from the recommended four-year plan provided by the academic department.
2. Assure the availability of courses to enable you to complete the four-year plan.
3. Recognize you for having completed the Four-Year Graduation Plan.

If you meet all the conditions of the Four-Year Plan but are unable to graduate due to the unavailability of a course, Iowa State University will first try to arrange for your department and college to substitute an equivalent course or an independent study assignment, or to waive the requirement to be met by the unavailable course. If the Provost determines that none of these adjustments is academically acceptable, Iowa State University will pay the ISU tuition for you to take the course required for you to complete your degree program within the next year. You must submit a written request for an accommodation to the Provost prior to the beginning of classes in the last term of your four-year plan in order for one of the above adjustments to be provided.

I have discussed this agreement with the adviser named below:

Student Name	Student Signature	Student Identification Number

I have discussed this agreement with the student named above:

Advisor's Signature	College	Date

(Please forward this contract to the Office of the Provost, 107 Beardshear Hall.)

Verified on behalf of Iowa State University:

Signature	Title	Date

University of Northern Iowa
Four-Year Graduation Guarantee

UNIGradPact

The University of Northern Iowa, in response to a student body that is diverse in experiences, talents, expectations and goals, has developed a "pact" that is designed to assist students in completing an undergraduate degree within four calendar years of their initial freshman enrollment. Students may follow many paths to graduation, with dozens of majors and concentrations offered through five undergraduate colleges. In addition, special programs can be tailored to the needs and interests students bring to the campus or discover once they are here. Students who wish to participate in the four-year graduation plan must average from 16 to 18 credits per semester (one quarter of the applicable credits for their major each year) and will need to make academic and personal choices that will result in graduation within four years.

UNI's four-year graduation plan is called **UNIGradPact**. Students who enroll as freshmen with well-defined interests, in "pact-approved" majors, and who want to complete their undergraduate study as expeditiously as possible, are assured of being able to enroll in courses allowing graduation in four calendar years. **UNIGradPact** is an agreement between the University and those students who choose to participate in the plan.

> ***Students** accept responsibility for monitoring their own progress toward degrees and for making choices that will allow them to graduate within four calendar years. **The University** is responsible for maintaining systems of advising so that students can track their progress, and agrees to provide the needed courses or their equivalents.*

The University continues to encourage breadth and exploration as essential parts of a university education. **UNIGradPact** is designed to assure that students are carefully guided in their course choices while still benefitting from the rich educational opportunities offered by the University. Those students who conclude that **UNIGradPact** does not meet their academic and/or personal goals are encouraged to develop in consultation with their academic advisor a plan and timetable for completing the courses in their major that will allow them to achieve their individual academic, career, professional and personal aspirations. Those students who do not participate in the plan will still benefit from descriptions of recommended patterns of progress toward degrees and enhanced advising services that will be available to all students.

General Conditions

1. Students must enter the University as freshmen with appropriate high school preparation to begin a four-year graduation plan.

2. Students must sign up for **UNIGradPact** and declare their interests in a major that qualifies for the four-year plan.

3. Students are responsible for meeting deadlines and requirements of the pact. Therefore, students must regularly monitor their progress toward graduation. Such monitoring includes meeting each semester, in a timely manner prior to registration, with their academic advisor.

4. For courses required by the major and for graduation, students must accept any available section that can be accommodated in their course schedule and must register at their assigned registration time.

5. Students must be admitted and remain in good academic standing to the colleges and departments which offer their major.

6. Students may change majors and remain in the program if, at the time the student decides to make the change, he or she can still meet the requirements of the new major and graduate within the four calendar years. Students may enroll in an additional major or in programs leading to additional licensing and certification, and remain in UNIGradPact, if they can complete these additional requirements and those of their first major within the four calendar years. Students must see their academic advisor in a timely manner in order to accomplish these changes or additions.

7. Students must accept responsibility for timely annual application for all necessary financial assistance.

8. Students must complete a minimum of one quarter of the applicable credits for their major each year (including summer sessions).

9. If, after working with their advisor, it appears that graduation may be delayed due to the unavailability of a course, students must notify the Office of the Provost, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, in writing prior to the beginning of classes in the term in which the course would be needed.

If the student meets all the conditions of the four-year plan but is unable to graduate due to the unavailability of a course, the university will offer one of the following:

1. Allow the student to graduate in four years by substituting a different course or an independent study assignment, as determined by the department and the college offering the student's major.

2. Allow the student to graduate in four years by waiving the requirement to be met by the unavailable course, as determined by the department and college offering the student's major.

3. Allow the unavailability of a course to delay the student from graduating in four years, in which case the University will waive UNI tuition and mandatory fees for this course in order for the student to graduate within the next year.

These procedures will be the exclusive remedy for the four-year plan (UNIGradPact) agreement. The University is under no obligation to provide one of these adjustments unless the student submits a written request for an accommodation to the Provost prior to the beginning of classes in the last term of the student's four-year plan.

By signing this agreement, the student agrees to satisfactorily complete coursework identified on the attached plan of study, comply with the UNIGradPact General Conditions, and meet the requirements to graduate in four calendar years. The University, by signature of the department head, agrees to offer the courses or equivalents needed by the student to graduate under this four-year plan.

Student Name	Student Signature	Student Identification Number
		Major
Department Head Name	Department Head Signature	Date

Earning Your Degree in Four Years

There are many reasons students want to complete their degrees in four years: some want to enter the fulltime work force as soon as possible; others are planning to continue their education and do not want to prolong their undergraduate years; others feel they will save money if they graduate within four years. But lots of events in your life can't be predicted. You may find that an opportunity for a valuable internship or a study abroad experience means that you'll choose not to complete your studies in four years. Or new interests may cause you to change your goals and your major, and add course work before graduation. Illness can intervene, as can other emergencies. Some technical and career-focused majors require additional time to complete a degree.

Whether or not you graduate in four years, planning your progress toward your degree will add depth to your university experience and ensure that *you* are in control of *your* education.

A few things to keep in mind:

- The University of Iowa helps students plan for graduation by providing clear information about requirements that you and your adviser can use to plan your course work and by providing sufficient places in the classes you'll need. Each semester the registrar provides a Degree Evaluation listing the courses you've completed and requirements that you still need to complete. You also will use the *Schedule of Courses*, departmental materials, and other sources of information to develop and monitor your plan for graduation.
- To graduate in four years you need to complete 30–32 semester hours each year. Some students do this by taking 15 semester hours one semester and 16 in the other; others will take fewer hours each semester but schedule summer classes to make up the difference.
- In order to graduate in four years you will need to be somewhat flexible—sometimes you'll have to take a class at a time that may not be completely convenient, or you may need to substitute an alternative class for one that is unavailable during a specific semester or at a specific time.
- Going to class is only part of earning a degree. To do well, you will need to maintain a ratio of class time to study time of at least two hours of study for every one hour of class credit. This ratio means that enrolling in 15-16 semester hours assumes a 30-hour-per-week study commitment, or a total of 45-48 hours each week devoted to your degree. Over the course of a week, even a 45-hour commitment can allow for a part-time job, a social life, and other activities. But good time-management skills are very important. This may be a subject you'll want to discuss with your adviser.
- Every semester you should review your plan with your adviser, to be sure that you are still "on track," and to incorporate any changes that are appropriate.

How the plan works:

- If you are interested in a four-year degree, at Orientation you and an adviser will use one of the "Freshman Year" plans that have been developed and you'll sign the Four-Year Graduation Plan.
- During freshman year, you and your adviser will plot out a tentative Four-Year Plan.
- Every semester, you and your adviser will check your plan and your Degree Evaluation. You will use your Degree Evaluation to ensure that you are completing all your requirements, and to keep track of the number of semester hours you are earning toward your degree. Your plan will help you to see the overall picture, and serve as your map to your graduation goal.

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION PLAN

Students at The University of Iowa may follow many diverse paths to complete a bachelor's degree. One of the options students may elect is to complete their degree requirements within four years of their initial freshman enrollment. There are many reasons students may want to complete their degrees in four years: some want to enter the full-time work force as soon as possible, others are planning to continue their education and do not want to prolong undergraduate study, and most want to save money.

With the encouragement of the Iowa State Board of Regents, The University of Iowa has developed a plan to help students who have a desire to graduate in four years. Students who elect to participate in The University of Iowa Four-Year Graduation Plan will work closely with their advisers to make sure they know the requirements that must be met and the appropriate sequences in which to take courses. The University has a long history of helping students plan for, and register in, the courses they need to graduate in a timely manner, and students who elect to participate in the agreement below can be assured that they will be able to enroll in courses allowing graduation in four years.

THE AGREEMENT

By signing below, I agree to participate in the Four-Year Graduation Plan. The University assures me that I will be able to enroll in courses that permit graduation in four years. The University will ensure that graduation in four years will not be delayed by the unavailability of courses. If I graduate in four years, I will be recognized for doing so upon graduation.

Conditions I will satisfy:

1. Enter the University as a freshman.
2. Choose a major that qualifies for the Four-Year Plan.
3. Have the preparation to begin a four-year plan in my major at
4. Stay on track by completing a minimum of one quarter of the
5. Meet with my adviser in a timely manner to discuss
6. Enroll in available courses needed for my
7. Accept responsibility for monitoring my
8. Change majors only if
9. Remain in good
10. Accept responsibility for timely annual application
11. Notify in writing
delayed due to the

In the event that the University
of a course (or courses), the

1. Allow the student to graduate in four years by substituting a different course (or courses), as determined by the department and the college offering the student's major, for the unavailable course(s).
2. Allow the student to graduate in four years by substituting an independent study assignment, as determined by the department and the college offering the student's major, for the unavailable course.
3. Allow the student to graduate in four years by waiving the requirement to be met by the unavailable course (or courses), as determined by the department and the college offering the student's major, for the unavailable course(s).
4. Allow the unavailability of a course (or courses) to delay the student from graduating in four years, in which case, the University will pay the tuition for the student to take the unavailable course(s) in a later term.

These procedures shall constitute the exclusive remedy for the Four-Year Graduation Plan agreement. The University is under no obligation to provide these adjustments unless the student submits a written request for accommodation to the dean of the college offering the degree prior to the beginning of classes in the last term of the student's four-year plan.

I have discussed this agreement with the adviser named below:

Student Name	Student Signature	Student Identification Number

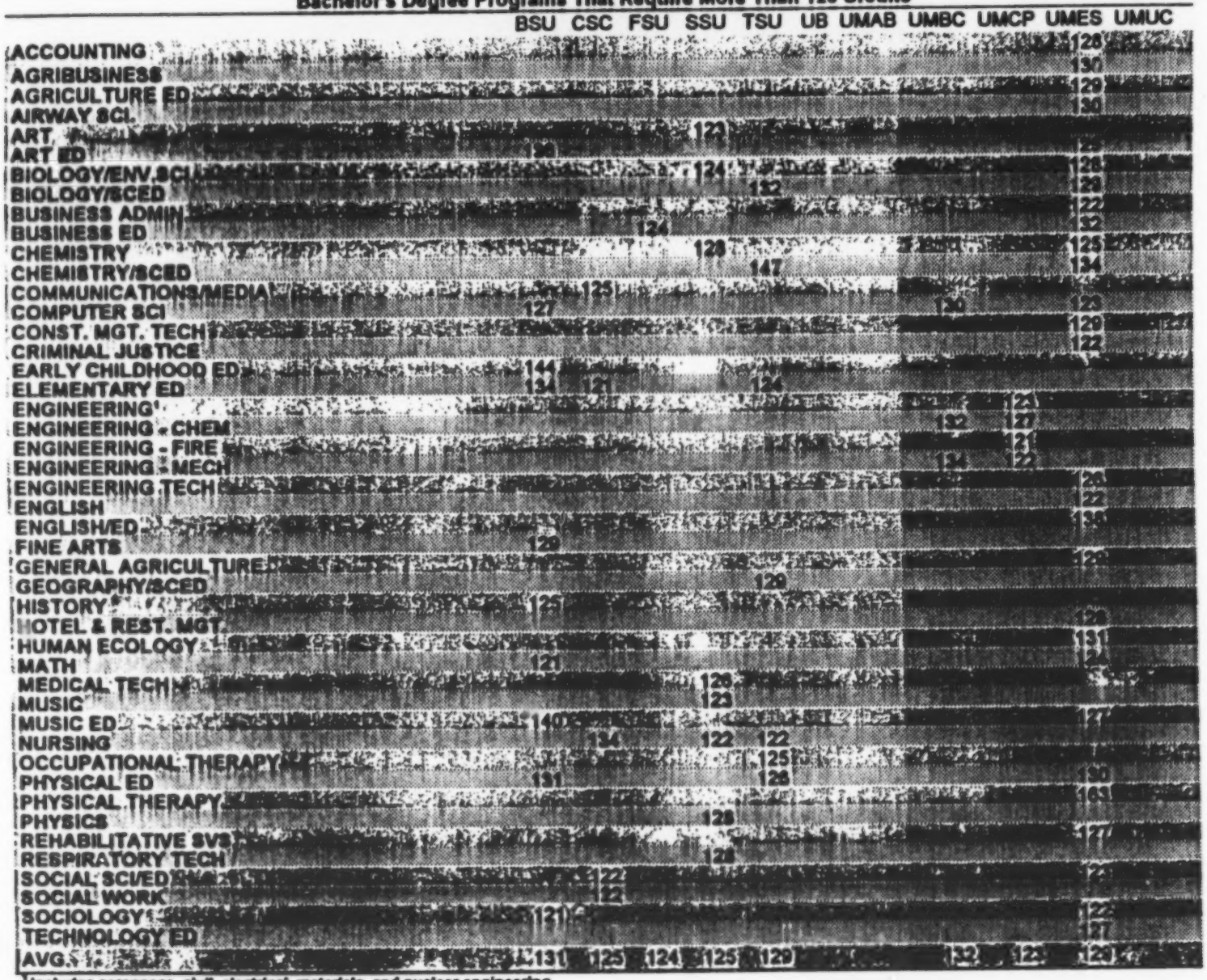
I have discussed this agreement with the student named above:

Adviser Name	Adviser Signature	Date

APPENDIX E

DATA ON CREDIT HOUR REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION UMS SYSTEM AND MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SYSTEM
TIME TO DEGREE SURVEY
Bachelor's Degree Programs That Require More Than 120 Credits



[1] Includes aerospace, civil, electrical, materials, and nuclear engineering

Source: Time to Degree Survey, 1996

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MAJOR	TOTAL CREDIT HOURS
Vocal Music Major - with teacher certification	144
Medical Technology	143-145
Instrumental Music Major - with teacher certification	142
Physics Teaching (Bachelor's Degree)	141
Sports Administration Concentration	138
Teacher Certification Concentration - K12	138
Fine Art	138-139
Dance Education	136
History Major - with teacher certification	135
Electrical Engineering	135
Computer Science	134
Theatre Arts	134
Industrial Engineering	134
Physics Major - Option B	133
Accounting	133
Civil Engineering	133
Language Arts (Teacher Education)	132
Foods & Nutrition Didactic Program in Dietetics Pln.V	130-132
Information Systems	130
Recreation & Parks Concentration	130
Performance Major - Vocal (Revised)	129
Engineering Physics Majors - Option B	129
Economics	128
Art Education	128
Finance	128
International Finance	128
Biology	127-129
Mathematics Major - teacher certification	127
Business Administration	127
Management	127
Marketing	127
Performance Major - Instrumental	125
Engineering Physics Major - Option A	123
Elementary Education	123
Psychology	122-125
General Home Economics	122
History Major	121
Telecommunications	121
Chemistry (professional program)	120
Literature and Language Arts	120
Creative Writing	120
Journalism	120
Writing for Television	120
History Major - African Amer Studies Concentration	120
Mathematics Major	120
Philosophy - with Philosophy Concentration	120
Philosophy - with Religious Studies Concentration	120
Philosophy - Pre-Law Concentration	120
Physics Major - Option A	120
Political Science	120
Sociology and Anthropology	120
Health Administration - concentration #1	120
Community Health Education - concentration #2	120
Environmental Health - concentration #3	120

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Hospitality Management	120
Social Work	120
Mental Health - Community Development	120
Mental Health - Community Mental Health	120
Mental Health - Human Development	120
Mental Health - Human Service Administration	120